

Society of Apothecaries
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The Apothecaries Reply to the City's Printed Reasons against Their Bill.

Humbly Submitted to the Consideration of the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled.

FIRST, It is alledg'd against the Bill, That the Ground thereof is *False*; viz. That the Apothecaries serving Parish, Ward, and Leet-Offices, takes up so much of their Time, that they cannot perform their Trust in their Trade, or attend their Patients according to their Duty.
Answer, This Suggestion had been indeed *False*, could those several Offices have been executed without employing any time therein. 'Tis suggested, That the Duty of (and the only Trust reposed in) the Apothecaries, is to make and compound their Medicines, and then to carry or send them by their respective Servants (as other Tradefmen do).

Answer, It were for the Ease and Interest of the Apothecaries to wish, that their Attendance were never required, and that the Necessity of the Case did never dispense with their administering Physick without a Physician's Prescription: But it is so *Notorious* in Fact as it needs no Proof, That did not the Apothecaries in Charity Give to many both their Attendance and Physick, some Thousands would perish, seeing their unhappy Incapacity can pay for neither.

This is not alledg'd to plead for a Liberty of Practice, but only to expose the evident Falsity of the Suggestion: And it's presum'd, scarce any that oppose this Bill would employ that Apothecary who should only send his Servants, refusing in Person to visit, whilst he was under a Physical Prescription.

Secondly, Whereas it is suggested, That most of the Offices in the Bill mentioned may be executed by Deputy:

Answer, This is equally Chargeable with Fining: And if the Personal Attendance of this Profession in those Offices is not consistent with the Common Interest, It's humbly submitted to the Great Wisdom of this Right Honourable House, Whether it's reasonable that the Professors should be thus charged; for that is in effect, with humble Submission, obliging this Profession to buy an Exemption for a General Good. Which (with all due Submission) it may be hop'd this Honourable Parliament will now Grant without Price. For in none of those Laws, Statutes, or Customs, that have (for a General Good) exempted Lawyers both Common and Civil, Attorneys, Proctors, &c. or Physicians and Surgeons, was it thought equitable to oblige any of those Professions, by Fines or other Impositions, to buy such Exemptions. Neither was it in any of the above Instances thought proper (upon giving such Exemptions to any of the before-mention'd Professions) to disable any of those Professors from such Common Rights (as Voting) in any Election whatsoever; that being depriving men of a Right which all degrees of men in some respect enjoy. Neither (with all due Submission) would those Laws have seem'd consistent with themselves, that should in one part have given an Immunity or Privilege to a Profession, whose very Professors by the same Statute should be punish'd by being depriv'd of a Common Right. And this without any Offence by them committed; unless it can be said to be a Crime for men to receive such Benefits as the Legislators (for the Good of Mankind) think fit to give.

It is suggested, That the Apothecaries are Ambitious of several Offices of Honour and Profit, in which as much of their Time is spent, as in those they would now be exempted from.

Answer, There are not above Eight Apothecaries Common Council-men; but One (at present) an Alderman's Deputy; but One in the Lieutenancy; not exceeding Two Captains in Commission, in the City of London; none of which was by them sought.

As for their spending some Time in Electing Lord-Mayor, &c. those Elections are very seldom, and so but a small part of their Time therein spent: And being in them a voluntary Act, it's never done to the Neglect of their Patients. But it is quite otherwise in those Offices which positively require their Personal Service.

Thirdly, 'Tis Objected, That the Apothecaries have not the same Reasons for Exemptions as the Physicians, whose Personal Attendance is required, and they cannot act by Proxy.

Answer, 'Tis confess'd that Physicians must Act in Person: And it is as manifest Truth that the Apothecaries do, even to the spending much more time therein than the Physician doth; and (as before-observed) in a thousand Instances must, (where the Physicians can't be paid, and for that reason generally are not sent for) or the Patients must perish. And which of these two spend most time on their Patients (with humble Submission) most deserve an Exemption.

Some of the Learned'st and Eminent'st Physicians knowing the grounds of this Bill to be true, have industriously promoted the Passing thereof; for which the Apothecaries think themselves in gratitude bound to make their publick acknowledgment.

Fourthly, 'Tis asserted that the Fines for Offices by Act of Common Council are forbid to be applied to Fines, &c.

Answer, This very Prohibition proves the before-common Abuses of those Fines; and it can plainly be proved, that notwithstanding that Act (in the greatest part of them) they are still mispent in luxurious Treats.

Fifthly, As for the Universal Exemption of all Apothecaries throughout the Kingdom by those Reasons complained of:

Answer, In this the City seem officiously to Oppose what all other parts of England (by their silence) may be presumed to desire as a common good; for upon first reading this Bill, the grounds thereof, and the benefits thereby, were thought so reasonable and advantageous, that a worthy Member of the House of Commons Mov'd the Exemption might extend to all Parts of England. This motion was so well approv'd of, that the Bill was immediately alter'd to its now latitude.

Sixthly, 'Tis Objected, That the present Exemptions from Offices are already too many, and that such Immunities tend to the great Oppression of the Subject, especially the poorer sort.

Answer, There are not above Three hundred thirty seven Apothecaries within the Bills of Mortality; and modestly speaking, there are about One hundred and thirty thousand houses, as is presumed upon a Critical calculation (notwithstanding what the City Reasons hath said to the contrary): So that there is but one Apothecary to near four hundred Families, and above Two thousand persons to an Apothecary within those Limits.

Now admitting that the Apothecaries Abused Fines for Offices, Communibus Annis, come to One hundred Pounds per Ann. (which is the most they would amount to) the Forgiving those Mis-spent Fines would not be One farthing yearly charge to each of the above-Number of Houses: For 130 thousand Farthings comes to 135 l. 8 s. and 4d. And how very Oppressive this desired Exemption would thus prove, deserved the Consideration of the Objectors, before they made this Groundless Suggestion.

But admitting that there were not above the One half of the before-Number of Houses within the Bills of Mortality, then the Charge would not amount to a farthing half farthing per Annum, to each House: And what Master of a Family doth so little regard his Health, as not rather to pay that Inconsiderable Charge, than that his Apothecary (by any of those Common Offices) should be engaged, when nothing less than the saving his own (or some of his Families) Life, necessarily requires his Attendance.

It is pretended that no Reason can be assign'd for Exempting Apothecaries from Offices, &c. but may with as much colour be given for any other Occupation concerned about the necessities of Life.

Ans. As for Bakers, Brewers, Butchers, &c. the Masters in those Trades work very little, their men doing all under them, and so they in their Persons are much at leisure, and consequently may well (without any publick prejudice) serve in Offices; but otherwise in the case of Apothecaries, where the Master's Attendance is desired by all Patients, and their own Eyes necessarily required to see most of their Medicines faithfully prepared. — Besides if any other Traders neglect their Trade, the prejudice tends only to their private Property, whereas by the neglect of the Apothecary the Patients would many times Perish.

And whereas these Gentlemen alledge that the Poorer sort will be most grieved by Passing this Bill: It's humbly conceived, That those will receive the greatest Benefits by the Passing thereof. For the Apothecaries not being deprived of any part of their Time or Money [by Services or Fines] upon the account of any of those Troublesome or Fineable Offices, They will be then more at leisure and the better able to bestow both their Visits and Medicines on the Poorer Sort.

Now whether the Apothecaries Only should be charged with this 100 l. per Ann. in their Fines for their Exemption, or the One hundred and thirty thousand Families (that within the Bills of Mortality receive the Advantages of their due undisturb'd Attendance on their Profession), insensibly bear this Charge, is at present under the mature Consideration of this August and Right Honourable Assembly: To whose great Wisdom the Premises are most humbly submitted.